

APPENDIX

TO THE

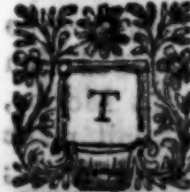
LONDON MAGAZINE.

MDCCLXII.

JOURNAL of the PROCEEDINGS and DEBATES in the POLITICAL CLUB, continued from Page 591.

*The Motion made by Licinius Mene-
nius, as mentioned in our last, was
seconded by L. Sergius Fidenas, in
a short Speech to this Effect.*

Mr. President,
S I R,

HE Inquiry moved for
by the noble Lord, is
so generally and so
loudly called for by
the People without
Doors, and it is what
we have in former Parliaments been
so often provoked to by those with-
in, who have had for many Years
the Direction of our publick Af-
fairs, that I can suggest to myself
but one Reason for its being now
opposed, by those very Men who
have formerly thrown out Defian-
ces, and provoked us to inquire into
their Conduct. In former Parlia-
ments, when they threw out those

Defiances, they were well assured of
having a great Majority of their
Friends in the House, consequently
A they were sure of having such Gen-
tlemen named of the Select Com-
mittee, as would follow their Direc-
tions in the Inquiry they were to
make, and from such an Inquiry
they could fear no Danger, even
tho' their Guilt had been as appa-
rent as the Sun in a clear Day.

That this, Sir, would be the Con-
sequence they knew by Experience,
because they had had a Proof of
it in the Affair relating to the Frauds
of the Customs, which was brought
under the Consideration of the House
by the famous Excise Scheme; for
the Reason given for putting that
insufferable Yoke upon the Necks
of the People was, the many Frauds
committed in the Customs. These
Frauds our Ministers said were en-
tirely owing to the Artifice and

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Cunning of our Merchants and Shopkeepers, and that it was impossible to prevent or put a Stop to them, any other Way than by turning all the considerable Branches of our Customs into an Excise. On the other hand, our Merchants insisted, that most of the Frauds in our Customs were owing to Misconduct, Neglect, or Connivance in the Officers, and that they might be almost entirely prevented by some proper Regulations, and by having a watchful Eye over the Conduct of our Custom-house Officers.

This, I say, Sir, our Merchants insisted on. They not only insisted upon it, but they went further: They got their Friends in the House to insist upon an Inquiry into the Frauds of the Customs; and our Ministers having set those Frauds in such a hideous Light, could not avoid consenting to such an Inquiry; but what was the Consequence? As they had a great Majority of their Friends in the House, the Commissioners of the Treasury, and a few of their select Friends, were put upon this Select Committee of Inquiry. That is to say, the Gentlemen who have the Nomination both of the Commissioners and Officers of the Customs, and are, consequently, answerable for their Conduct, were appointed to inquire into and detect their Misconduct, without any Indemnification to those Smugglers that should come to give Evidence against a Commissioner or Officer, or to any inferior Officer that should come to give Evidence against his Superior. Upon the Appointment of such a Committee, the Merchants despaired of any Success, therefore they resolved to give themselves no Trouble, and the Inquiry ended, as every one expected it should, in a Justification of all the Commissioners and Officers of our Customs.

This was a most certain Proof to

our Ministers, that they could never be in any Danger from an Inquiry into their Conduct, as long as they had a great Majority of their Friends in Parliament; and accordingly, from henceforth, they began to be more frequent, and more presumptuous in throwing out their Defiances than they had ever been before. But the Case is now altered: The Majority of this House seems to consist of such as will not approve of their Conduct, unless they find it merits their Approbation; therefore, if a Select Committee of Inquiry be appointed, it will probably consist of such Gentlemen as will make it their Business to inquire strictly and impartially; and this may, perhaps, be a Reason for their endeavouring now to prevent, what they have so often before provok'd; but if they do, it will be a stronger Argument for the Motion, than any I can think of in its Favour, and therefore I shall add no more, but conclude with seconding what the noble Lord has proposed.

The first that stood up to oppose this Motion was C. Duillius, whose Speech was in Substance thus:

Mr. President,

S I R,

THE Hon. Gentleman who spoke last, has suggested such a Reason for opposing this Motion, as, I believe, he thinks, will make Gentlemen ashamed to oppose it; and, indeed, if I were upon this Question to determine myself by the Regard I have for the Administration, and without any Regard to my Country, or to the Dignity of this House, I should be far from opposing it: On the contrary, I should before now have taken an Opportunity to make some such Motion, for the very Reason suggested why some Gentlemen should be against it: I mean, because I

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am convinced, that a proper Committee would be appointed, and that that Committee would inquire in the strictest and most impartial Manner. This, I am sure, is what every one who has the Honour of being employed by his Majesty most heartily wishes for, and they have all Reason to do so, because it would put an End to all those Calumnies, which by some People, for what Reason may be easily guessed at, have been so artfully invented, and so industriously spread against them.

For this Reason, Sir, if I were to lay aside all Regard for my Country, as well as the Regard I have for the Dignity of this House, I should most heartily concur in any Motion for an Inquiry into the Conduct of our publick Affairs; because I am not only a Friend to those employed in the Administration, but have the Honour to have some small Share in it. But the true Interest of my Country, and the real Dignity of this House, shall always with me outweigh every private or personal Consideration; and therefore, let Gentlemen think what they will, I must be against an Inquiry which I think unnecessary, or at a Time when I think it would be dangerous; because an unnecessary Inquiry I take to be inconsistent with the Dignity of this House, and an Inquiry, at such a critical Conjuncture as the present, would certainly be of the most dangerous Consequence to the Nation. A Minister may be calumniated, and may have most glaring Falshoods propagated against him. Was there ever a Minister that had not? But when the Charge against him is known to be false, would it be consistent with the Dignity of this Assembly to take up our Time with an Inquiry into his Conduct, merely for the Sake of vindicating his Character? Suppose we had Reason to

think that the Charge against him was not altogether groundless, would it be prudent or right in us to divert ourselves with an Inquiry into his Conduct, at a Time when the very Being of the Nation was at Stake, and when the Preservation of our Country required our closest Attention?

Upon both these Accounts, Sir, I must be against the Inquiry proposed. I do not think there is the least Truth in the Stories that have been propagated, nor the least Foundation for any Charge that has been brought against the Administration in general, or against any particular Man concerned in it. They are all, indeed, without any Proof, or they are of such a Nature as I cannot think criminal, because they relate to the Measures pursued by the Administration, all or most of which I have, as a Member of this House, approved of, because at the Time they were respectively transacted I thought them right; and if any of them should now appear to have been wrong, which I am far from being convinced of, I must impute the Error to the Weakness of human Wisdom, and not to any Weakness or criminal Intention in those that advised or pursued them.

This, Sir, is my Way of thinking, and while I think so, I must look upon an Inquiry into the Conduct of our publick Affairs as absolutely unnecessary, and consequently inconsistent with the Dignity of this House. But suppose I thought otherwise: Suppose I thought, some of our Ministers had, through Weakness or Wickedness, misled the Crown, or that they had been guilty of illegal Practices in the Execution of what was committed to their Care by the Crown, I should be far from thinking the present a proper Time for inquiring into and punishing their Misdemeanors; because, however guilty they might be, the Nation could

could not suffer by a Delay of Justice, whereas it might suffer, perhaps be undone, by calling great Offenders to an Account, at a Crisis more important and more dangerous to this Nation than any our History furnishes us with an Account of.

The Power of this House is, 'tis true, vastly extensive: I hope, it will always be superior to the Power of any Offender whatever; but great as it is, we cannot exert it against Offenders in very high Stations, without taking up a great deal of our Time, and raising a mighty Bustle in the Nation, the Consequence of which, with regard to our domestick Quiet, no Man can pretend to foresee or determine. Therefore, however much we may have suffered by the wicked Advice or illegal Practices of great Offenders, we should take a proper Time to inquire into and punish their Misdoings; for we ought not certainly to expose ourselves to the Danger of any domestick Disturbance, when we are in the greatest and most imminent foreign Danger, which every Gentleman must allow to be our Case at present.

The next that stood up was P. Furius Philus, who spoke to the Effect as follows:

Mr. President,

I Am surpris'd, Sir, to hear the Motion made by the noble Lord oppos'd by any Gentleman in this House; A Motion founded in Justice, supported by Precedent, and warranted by Necessity. Not only Justice to the Nation, but Justice to those that have been in the Administration, calls for an Inquiry, that every Man's Actions may speak for him, and that Censure may be confined to those only that have deserved it. Surely no innocent Man can be under any Apprehensions from

the strictest Examination of his Conduct: Those Fears attend the Guilty only.

The Hon. Gentleman seems to think an Inquiry unnecessary. I beg Leave to ask, will any Gentleman in this House undertake to defend the Measures that have been pursued for twenty Years past? Will any Gentleman say, that the wretched Condition we are in, is the Effect of Chance only? Shall there be the least Suspicion of Mismanagement, and a *British* House of Commons not inquire into it? How much more at a Time when the Nation is reduced to the last Extremity by corrupt, weak and pusillanimous Measures? Shall the Fatality that has attended every Step of our Conduct for so many Years past, infect this House also, and throw us into a Lethargy? Surely, no. The Voice of the Nation calls for an Inquiry: Our Credit abroad cannot be supported without it; and the Reputation of every Man in this House is nearly concerned in it. In vain shall we attempt to retrieve our lost Honour by pursuing *new* Measures, if we do not first censure and punish the Authors of the *old*: In vain shall we attempt to gain Allies, and to convince them that we are in earnest in the Prosecution of the War against our Enemies *abroad*, unless we first call those to an Account, that have been their secret Abettors and Encouragers at *home*.

If ever there was a Cause for an Inquiry into past Transactions, it is now. Have not large Sums of Money been raised in Times of Peace, and no Debts paid; large Armies raised in Times of War, and no Services performed? Have we not negotiated ourselves out of all our Allies, and all our Credit? Treaty after Treaty, Convention after Convention, and what did these all end in but War? How has that War been

been conducted? Why, shamefully, scandalously, to the Encouragement of the Enemy and the Dishonour of the Nation: Large Fleets fitted out to fight the Seas only, and return shattered and torn to *Spithead*, while the Enemy were every Day taking A our Ships for want of Cruizers and Convoys, and neighbouring Nations taking this Advantage to supplant us in Trade. A gallant Admiral was indeed sent to the *West Indies*, but sent too late, and not supported when there: Another was sent to the *Mediterranean*, but with what B Intent I know not, unless it was to cover an Embarkation of *Spanish* Troops for *Italy*.

Shall a *British* House of Commons not inquire into the Causes of these Things? They must: They will, Sir, or forfeit all the Reputation they have hitherto gained. And if these Things are to be inquired into, what better Method than by a Select Committee to be chosen by Ballot? It is a parliamentary Method: It is a Method that C has been attended with many good Consequences to the Nation, but fatal ones, indeed, to those that have made an Abuse of Power; and 'tis unaccountable to me, that any others but such, or those that have a Mind to screen them, should make an Opposition to it. For my own Part, if it was the Case of my Brother, if he was innocent, I should think this the properest Method to make that Innocence appear; and if he was guilty, I should think it the greatest Crime in me, to endeavour to screen him from national Justice, therefore, I am heartily for the Question.

Cn. Fulvius stood up next, and spoke in Substance thus:

Mr. President,

S I R,

W HEN I consider the present Circumstances of this Na-

tion and of *Europe*: When I reflect, that we are now engaged in open War with one of the most potent Kingdoms in *Europe*, upon the Event of which both our Trade and Navigation depend: When I reflect, that *Europe* is now engaged in a War, upon the Event of which its Liberty depends, and by which it will probably be enslaved, unless we interpose with the Utmost of our Strength, I cannot but be of Opinion, I think every Man must, that B Union amongst ourselves was never more necessary than it is at this important Crisis, and therefore, I am not a little surprised to hear a Proposition seriously made, and vigorously supported in this House, which must necessarily not only revive all our former Divisions, but create new Divisions amongst us, and excite more violent Animosities than any that have appeared in this Kingdom for many Years past.

That this, Sir, would be the Effect of a general Inquiry into the Conduct of our publick Affairs for so many Years past, we must suppose from the Experience of all former Inquiries; and as the Inquiry now proposed is more general, and comprehends a longer Time, than any such Inquiry ever did, this Effect E will not only be the more certain but the more fatal. Nay that this will be the Effect must appear from the very Nature of the Charge, upon which the Motion is founded; for the Charge consists chiefly, not in Facts or Practices that must be admitted to be Crimes, but in Allegations, that the Measures we have been pursuing were wrong, notwithstanding their having been all authorised or approved of by Parliament. Must F not this of Course revive all our former Disputes about the Fitness or Unfitness of those Measures? And when the Condemnation or Acquittal of Men in high Stations depends upon the Fate of the Question, must

not

not those Disputes be carried on with greater Animosity, I may say with greater Fury than ever they were before ?

One Part of the Charge, indeed, I shall admit to be criminal. To apply the publick Money towards corrupting the Members of this House, or the Voters at any Election, must by all Men be allowed to be a heinous Crime ; but it is pleasant to observe, how the Advocates for this Motion attempt to prove this Part of their Charge. With regard to the Measures that have been approved of by Parliament, they first suppose, that those Measures were apparently wrong, and their Inference from hence is, that therefore the Members must have been under a corrupt Influence, otherwise such Measures could not have met with an Approbation in Parliament. Then with regard to Elections, they first suppose, that the Majority of the Electors were dissatisfied with the Measures of the Administration, and would consequently have sent up dissatisfied Representatives, if they had been left to a free and uncorrupted Choice, but as they did not do so, therefore the Electors were certainly under a corrupt Influence. This is all the Proof they have hitherto offered, and will any Gentleman say, that this Sort of Proof ought to be considered by this House as a sufficient Ground for an Inquiry ?

Questions in Politicks, Sir, are of such a Nature that they seldom or never admit of a Demonstration, and, consequently, in Countries where the People are allowed to speak their Minds, they will always be of different Sentiments with regard to Questions in Politicks. For this Reason, Gentlemen should not be so uncharitable as to suppose, that every Man who differs from them in Opinion is a corrupt Rogue, or that he forms his Judgment from any Thing

but the Conviction of his Conscience ; and therefore, a Parliament's having approved of any Measure I thought wrong, shall never by me be thought a Proof of its being under any Sort of corrupt Influence : Consequently what they have offered, cannot be admitted as a Proof, even by those who are convinced, that the Measures pursued by the Administration were apparently wrong, and much less by those who are convinced, that those Measures were right.

Now, Sir, with regard to Elections : They say, our Elections must have been under a corrupt Influence, because the Representatives were not of the same Complexion with the Majority of their Constituents. Here likewise the Proof they offer is a downright begging the Question. That there have been, are now, and always will be some Men without Doors, as well as within, who disapprove of the Measures pursued by our Government, I do not in the least question ; but that a Majority of the better Sort of People are so, or have lately been so, I cannot admit. Great Endeavours, great Artifice, and great Industry, have, I know, been lately used to impose upon and make them so ; and those Endeavours may upon several Occasions have had some Effect upon the giddy Mob ; but our Elections, thank God ! do not depend upon such People. They are generally governed by Men of Fortune and Understanding, and of such our Ministers, for this twenty Years past, have been so fortunate as to have a Majority in their Favour. Therefore, when we talk of People with regard to Elections, we ought to think only of those of the better Sort, without comprehending the Mob or mere Dregs of the People ; for an Election may be free and uncorrupted tho' the Mob appear against it, but would be very far from being free, if the Electors were

were intimidated and compelled to vote as directed by a tumultuous Mob of low People, and by them only it was, that any Member of this House was burnt in Effigy on Account of the late Excise Scheme, consequently, tho' that Member was rechosen at the same Place for a new Parliament, we are not to conclude, that his Election proceeded from Bribery or Corruption, because, perhaps, no one of those who assisted at burning him in Effigy had any Vote, Interest, or Concern in his Election.

Having thus shewn, Sir, that the Charge upon which this Motion is founded, consists of Allegations of Facts which are not admitted to be criminal, or of criminal Facts unsupported by any Proof, I must next observe, that, I believe, you cannot find upon your Journals a Precedent for entering into a parliamentary Inquiry, unless where Measures had been pursued that were admitted by a great Majority of the House, as well as the Nation, to be criminal, or unless some criminal Practices were alledged that were notoriously known to have been committed, or such as the Member who moved for the Inquiry undertook to prove. The general Inquiry that was set on Foot in the Year 1715, was founded upon Measures that were apparently criminal, and such as were thought to be so by a great Majority of that House of Commons. A most glorious War had been put an End to by a most infamous Peace: Our Allies had been deserted, if not betrayed: A most destructive Treaty of Commerce had been concluded with France; and when we might have prescribed Terms to our Enemies, our Ministers, from some selfish, if not criminal Views of their own, submitted to receive Terms from them. These were such Measures as almost every Man condemned,

except those that were concerned in advising them, or carrying them on; and therefore they furnished the Parliament with a just Foundation for an Inquiry; but of late Years, I am sure, no such Measures have been pursued, nor any Measures that can, or, I believe, will be condemned by a great Majority of this House of Commons. Therefore, we can now have no Pretence for setting up an Inquiry, unless some particular criminal Facts should be alledged and offered to be proved; and even in this Case, we could have no Pretence for a general Inquiry: We could inquire only into the particular Facts complained of, which would take up much less of our Time, and give less Disturbance to the Nation, than a general Inquiry into the Conduct of our publick Affairs for twenty Years past.

Such a general Inquiry, with such a long Retrospect, is without Precedent, and would be a most dangerous Precedent. If such an Inquiry should be agreed to, and a Committee appointed for that Purpose, it would be of course insisted on, that all Papers of State, even those of the most secret Nature, should be laid before them, and, indeed, they could not make their Inquiry compleat without having all such Papers. Our Committees appointed upon such Occasions are, I know, called Secret Committees; but how justly, Experience may shew; for few important Secrets have long remain'd so, after being once laid before such a Committee; and the Nature of the Thing speaks itself, for when a Secret is committed to a great Number of Persons, every one of them becomes the less careful of concealing it, because when it is discovered, it is not easy to fix the Discovery upon any one of them. Therefore if such a Precedent were once made, we could never hope to keep

keep any Secret, nor would any foreign State, or any Foreigner of Consequence, ever enter into any secret Transaction with our Government; because he could not know, but that the Secret might, twenty Years afterwards, be discovered by a Parliamentary Inquiry with a twenty Years Retrospect.

But besides being a dangerous Precedent, Sir, the setting up such an Inquiry at this Juncture might, nay, probably would, be attended with the most fatal Consequences, both with respect to our War against Spain, and with respect to our Negotiations for preserving a Balance of Power in Europe. As we have for some Time been carrying on a War against Spain, it is not to be doubted but our Ministers have had some secret Intelligence from thence: Our very News Papers tell us, that the Court of Spain have discovered a Plot for delivering the *Groyne* into our Hands; and tho' that Plot has been discovered, yet we may from thence presume, that our Ministers have still a secret Correspondence in Spain: Would it not be of the most fatal Consequence to have that Intelligence, or that Correspondence discovered? And can any one answer for its being kept concealed, after being exposed to a Secret Committee of this House, and all the Secretaries and Clerks that must necessarily be employed by them. We must likewise suppose, that several Schemes have been laid before our Ministers for attacking the *Spaniards*, both in Europe and America, and some of those Schemes may probably be such as ought to be carried into Execution; would it be prudent in us, to run the Risk of having all or any of those Schemes discovered to the Enemy? And yet this Risk we must run, if the present Motion should be agree'd to.

Then, Sir, with regard to our Negotiations: As the Flames of War have been above a Twelvemonth since

kindled in Germany: As there is a most powerful Confederacy formed against the House of *Austria*, we must suppose, that our Court have been carrying on Negotiations for drawing some of the Powers off from that Confederacy, and for forming a counter Confederacy in Favour of the Queen of *Hungary*. In all such Cases, as every Court in Europe has its own particular Views and Interests, the Negotiations must be of a most secret Nature: Arguments must be made use of, and Memorials delivered at one Court, which it would be most fatal to have discovered to another; and as all those Transactions are yet in Embrio, can we desire, that his Majesty should lay the Whole before a Committee of this House? Can we suppose it consistent with his Honour to do so, when we must suppose, that he has, at least with some of those Courts, engaged to keep the Transaction so secret as not to communicate it to any but some of his chief Ministers of State?

Upon the Whole, Sir, I can see no Occasion we have for the Inquiry proposed; and if I did, I think it impossible, in our present Circumstances, to carry it on with Effect. This is my sincere Opinion; and as I can see no Danger or Inconvenience in delaying it for a Year or two, in which Time our own Tranquillity, as well as the Tranquillity of Europe, may, perhaps, be re-established, and all those grand Affairs which are now in Agitation finally ended, I must therefore be against the Motion, and I hope the noble Lord, when he considers these Things, will agree to have it withdrawn.

The next Speech I shall give in this Debate was that made by A. Cornelius Cossus, the Purport of which was as follows:

Mr.

Mr. President,

S I R,

I DO not get up, as presuming to think any Thing that I shall offer can enforce a Question of this Importance. But as this Question tends to an Inquiry into those Measures which, in the universal Opinion of Mankind, have been thought so destructive to this Nation, an Opinion which, tho' in my private Sentiments I have ever joined in, yet, as I have never had an Opportunity of giving my publick Testimony against them, I cannot now refrain from expressing my Satisfaction at seeing the Time come, when they will be thoroughly sifted; and it is with Joy I look on myself as now going to give a Pledge to the Publick, that I shall ever look upon bad Measures with equal Detestation.

The People of *England*, reduced almost to a State of Despondency from the ruinous Conduct hitherto pursued for many Years past, have placed their only and last Hopes in the Independence, Justice, and Firmness of this Parliament: It is from this Confidence that every honest Man in the Kingdom now cheerfully submits to the Burden we are necessitated to impose on them; as they expect to see Freedom and Happiness secured to them at home, and national Honour retrieved abroad.—

But as these Hopes can only be answered by an Alteration of those Measures that have occasioned their Distress and Complaints, how baffled will they think themselves in their Expectations, should the Motion that has been made to you, be rejected in this House? How ill an Earnest would it be, that we intended an Alteration of Measures, should we decline an Inquiry into those that have been so cried out against? Could they possibly suppose it to be from any other Motive than an Apprehension, lest we might lay a Foundation for condemning our own future Con-

duct, by countenancing an Inquiry into that of others, which is passed?

But, Sir, whether the universal Complaint of past Measures be the Effect of Artifice and Misrepresentation (as might be pretended) on a weak and deluded People, or springs from the real Grievances of an injured and right-discerning one, I say, whichsoever be the Case, surely it is a Deference, an Indulgence at least, which in Decency, in Duty it becomes this House to shew the collective Body of the People of *Great Britain*, by giving them that Satisfaction which a thorough Disquisition into the Subjects of Complaint, only can, and only ought to give them.

And therefore, for God's Sake! let every Gentleman reflect on the Consequences that will attend your Determination in the Affair before you. Is the Screening a few publick Delinquents from Inquiry, to be put in Balance with the giving Repose to the disturbed Minds of the whole People of three Kingdoms?

I Inquiry is the Criterion of publick Virtue: It may, like *Ithuriel's* Spear, detect a Devil, however disguised in the Shape of an Angel, but can never obscure the Brightness of Truth. If Measures have been *right*, they will stand justified by it, and the People of *England* will rest satisfied: If they have been iniquitous, the People expect Justice on whomsoever the Guilt falls, and *wheresoever* it may extend itself. It is not a narrow personal Inquiry that is aimed at, meanly confined to *this* or *that* Offender, but an Inquiry into *Offences*, wheresoever they shall be found, that becomes the Dignity of this House.

I shall not take up your Time so unnecessarily, as by entering into a particular Disquisition of those Measures that call for this Inquiry, which have been so often and so well exposed, and which speak more strongly their own Guilt, than the most powerful Eloquence can point out. Un-

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experienced as I am in Matters of a publick Nature, I should think it no difficult Task, to run through a Deduction of our publick Mismanagement, both at home and abroad, *too gross* not to be the Objects of *common Discernment*, and some Instances perhaps that have not come within the Notice of the general Complaint. But I should think such a minute Discussion not only unnecessary but improper, as this Motion is most justly founded on the general Face of Things, and not to be diverted by giving room for a Debate on Particulars, the proper Subject of future Consideration. And, Sir, was it only from what you heard the other Day at your Bar *, and the Resolutions this House came into in Consequence of it †, the Expediency of the present Motion would be sufficiently enforced.

We have groaned under an Administration that have not only taken every Step to destroy our own Liberties at home, but have made us accessory in subverting, at least endangering, all the Liberties of *Europe*, who have made the *British* Name the Contempt of its Enemies, and lost the Confidence of those, whom Parity of Interest should make us consider as our Friends: An Administration whose Influence has diffused Neglect, Abuse, and Corruption into every the most minute Branch of our domestick Economy; for there is hardly an Office in the Kingdom, from the lowest to the highest, that does not call aloud for Parliamentary Inquiry: An Administration that, when it durst no longer withstand the united Voice of a justly enraged People, closed itself, in some Part, with the highest, the most provoking Strains of Insolence, that ever were dared to be offered any Nation under the Sun in our Circumstances, in making the most *distinguished Instruments* of the most

detested Measures triumph, by their Exaltation, over the Injuries and Resentment of the whole *British* Nation.

But, Sir, it is the future good Consequences that will attend this Inquiry, and the Examples arising from it, that prevail with me over all other Considerations: I have no doubt of seeing a Reformation of Measures for some Time: Who that looks round this Assembly can doubt it, as long as it subsists thus constituted? A wise and honest Parliament will always make those in the Direction of Affairs so too. But all these Things have their Periods, whereas Examples are of perpetual Security.

We are now, Sir, in a Situation, both as to our foreign and domestick Affairs, which points out *Union* as the only Means that can make us a glorious and happy People, and found the Throne of this Royal Family, which every Man of common Sense and Honesty must wish for, on that never to be shaken Basis, the undivided Hearts of the People. And Thanks be to God! the pleasing Prospect already opens itself, by the subsiding of those unfortunate Distinctions that have been artfully sown, in a general Zeal for promoting the true Honour of our King, and the Good of our Country: A Prospect that must give inexpressible Joy to all Lovers of both, and Mortification to none but those, who are wicked enough to prostitute the Name of *this Family* to serve the infamous Views of their own selfish Policy. National Union can only be brought about by giving national Satisfaction; and I look upon the Step we are now taking as perfectly contributory to that End. True Union can only subsist amongst honest Men: All other Union is amusive, and destructive of itself.

The Union I am speaking of is indissoluble.

* Merchants Petitions, See Votes, p. 66, 68, 69, 70, 73, 81. † See *ibid.* p. 123, 124.

indissoluble, and should the Dregs of Faction, whom the falsely assumed Denomination of a Party only made considerable, attempt to interrupt it, they would only discover their own Insignificancy, and add to the Contempt and Detestation the Publick A had of them.

As for the Method proposed by this Motion, it is the only one by which a publick Inquiry can be carried on properly, or with Success. The Impropriety of laying all Papers before the House, has been often allowed on all Hands, and every Man knows how easy it is to obstruct or perplex an Inquiry so extended as this is, if carried on before so numerous an Assembly. But this is so obvious to any Man who means getting at Truth, that I need only say, C that I consider all Arguments against this Method, as Objections raised only because it is practicable. For my own Part, as I consider this Question as tending to restore Satisfaction to the Nation, Credit and Popularity to the Government at home, and Weight D and Dignity to it abroad; and as it tends to the Honour of this Assembly, I am heartily for it.

The next Speech I shall give, was that made by T. Sempronius Gracchus, which was in Substance as follows, viz.

Mr. President,

S I R,

I SHOULD act a very inconsistent Part, if I did not support the Motion now under your Consideration, with the same Zeal with which I concurred in that made some few Days after I had the Honour of taking my Seat in this Assembly. Nothing, Sir, has happened, nothing, Sir, can happen to alter my Opinion in this Respect, that the Publick have a Right, that it is a Duty incumbent upon us to inquire strictly into the Conduct of the late Administration.

It was then my Opinion, that we had Grounds sufficient to induce us to that Inquiry: The general Voice of the Nation, the almost desperate Condition of our Affairs, both abroad and at home, then rendered the Inquiry highly necessary: The Presumption was strong, that the Interest of the Nation had been betrayed; and I thought I should have abused the Confidence reposed in me by my Country, if I had not endeavoured to discover in what Manner, B in what Instances, and by whom, it was betrayed.

But these Reasons for Inquiry are infinitely stronger now than then; we had Reason to inquire then from the Suspicions of the Publick, and from our own Suspicions. These C Reasons still subsist; and to these are added the Suspicions of the King himself: To these are added the visible Opinion of our Allies abroad.

The King has at length dismissed his Minister, and he has dismissed him without any Application from this House to that Purpose.—He has done it of his own Motion.—His Majesty has dismissed a Minister who had served him many Years, and, as we are well convinced, against the Inclination of that Minister. Had his Majesty believed, that he had E served him faithfully, who can imagine, that he would have turned him from his Service? We must therefore conclude, that his Majesty's Opinion has concurred with the Opinion of the Nation, with the Opinion of those in this House, who expressed F Suspicions of his Conduct.

Our Allies abroad have visibly proved by their late Measures, that they entertained the same Suspicions. A general Stupor seemed to have seized on all the Powers joined in common Interest with us: Their Resolutions were as languid, their Conduct equally tame and despicable, in the general Danger of Europe, as the Councils of this Nation. We

were told, that this Infatuation abroad was the Cause of our weak and pusillanimous Measures at home. But it is now discovered, that our Conduct was not influenced by their Measures, but that their Measures were influenced by our Conduct. The Moment that this Minister was divested of his Power, the Charm was at once dispelled: The *Dutch*, notwithstanding all the dilatory Forms of that Government, proceeded to a vast Augmentation of their Forces. The King of *Sardinia* has determined to take Part in the common Cause; and it is apparent, that from the Removal of this Minister, the Spirit of the Grand Alliance has happily revived, as much as it was once fatally depressed by the Removal of the great Duke of *Marlborough*.

This happy Event demands our Attention; it has opened a Prospect of Preservation to the Balance of Power, of which we had lost all View before. If we do not seize this happy Moment, how can we answer for it to ourselves, to our Country, to Posterity? But unless we engage with Vigour in this Inquiry, how can we hope to avail ourselves of this Event? Does any Man imagine, that it is a Change of Men that has given this new Life to the Counsels of our Allies? No, Sir, it is the Confidence that a Change of Measures will be the Consequence of a Change of Men, and such a Confidence must perish in its very Birth, if an Inquiry into the Errors of the past Administration should be stifled in this House.

Sir, to extricate this Nation, or to extricate *Europe* out of that Labyrinth of Dangers in which we are all involved, it is necessary that the present Administration should be supported by the Spirit and Inclinations of the People. The Confidence which is necessary to give them Weight abroad, is equally necessary

to enable them to raise the vast Supplies at home, which the critical Condition of our Interest demands. This Confidence in them can never be attained, but by a vigorous Prosecution of this Inquiry. A The Publick have some Distrust, that the new Administration are slack and tender in this Respect: In my own Breast I have none: I am happy in this Change, which has fallen in favour of those for whom I have entertained the highest Esteem, and for some of whom I have a singular and sincere Friendship. But, Sir, we must pay some Regard to the Opinions of the Publick, as well as to our own, and they will never be convinced, that the new Ministers mean well, if this Inquiry should be defeated here: They will interpret the Coldness of this House to a Disposition in the Administration to protect and screen, which must in the End produce the worst Effects, both to the Publick and to them. And therefore, as a Friend to my Country, and as a real Friend to them, I shall follow this Inquiry as far as I am able to pursue it.

Sir, I shall trouble the House very little farther at this Time, but I must observe with great Submission, that I think all Arguments that are used to prevent, or to delay the present Inquiry, are very indecent and disrespectful to this House; for they bear this inevitable Construction, that this House is actuated more by Passion and Prejudice, than by Impartiality and Justice. No Man can have the Confidence to assert, no Man can mean, that if the late Minister deserves the Censure of Parliament, he should not receive it: They can therefore mean nothing, but that they think him innocent, and think, that if we enter into this Inquiry, this House is determined to pronounce him guilty, whether he be so or no.

In private Life, what Man of common Sense would dismiss a Steward after a Service of twenty Years (during which his Accounts had never been inspected) without a careful Examination, before he gave him his Discharge? The Publick stand in the same Light with regard to this Minister, and the Publick will want common Sense in this Instance, as a private Man would do in the other, if they suffer this Minister to retire unquestioned, laden with Honours and an immense Wealth, far exceeding what the just and known Profits of his past Employments would have furnished.

The following is the Substance of what was said upon this Occasion by Servilius Priscus.

Mr. President,

S I R,

IT would very much shorten our Debates, upon this and every other Occasion, if Gentlemen would consider attentively the Subject of the Debate, and keep close to the Argument, without running out into Harangues or Flowers of Eloquence, which may be made use of upon any other Subject, as well as that which happens then to be under the Consideration of the House. That we have a Right to inquire into the Conduct of our publick Affairs, and that upon certain Occasions we ought to inquire, are Questions that have nothing to do in this Debate, because they are Questions which no Gentleman will deny. The only Questions now under our Consideration must therefore be, Whether we have now any Occasion for making such an Inquiry, and if we have, whether we ought now, or in this Session of Parliament, to enter upon that Inquiry. With regard to the first of these two Questions, I hope it will not be said, that we ought every Session of Parliament,

or once in every certain Number of Term of Years, to appoint a Secret and Select Committee for inquiring into the Conduct of our publick Affairs from the Time of the last parliamentary Inquiry. This we can

A no Way pretend to, either from Custom or Reason; for it is certain, that the Custom has always been, never to set up a parliamentary Inquiry, unless when great Crimes were known, or strongly suspected to have been committed, or unless **B** when such Measures had been pursued, as were allowed to have been weak or wicked. This, I say, has always hitherto been the Custom, and Reason must convince us, that it is right, and that it would be wrong in us to set up a parliamentary Inquiry, when there is no well-grounded Suspicion of Misconduct; for as such Inquiries must always be dangerous and troublesome, they ought never to be entered into without an apparent Necessity.

Taking it therefore for granted, **D** Sir, that no parliamentary Inquiry ought to be set up, unless when there appears to be a well-grounded Suspicion of Misconduct, I shall observe, that this Suspicion ought to be such a one as prevails in this House; and if this Observation be **E** just, it must be wrong to talk, upon any such Occasion, of the Voice of the People, or the Voice of the Nation. Sir, the Voice of this House is the Voice of the People, the Voice of the *British* Nation. It must always be understood to be so; for there **F** is no other Way of determining, what is the Voice of the Nation. If we were to form a Judgment of this from what we heard without Doors, every Man's Judgment would be according to the Sort of Company he usually conversed with. In **G** a free Country the Measures of the Government in general, and even every particular Measure will be canvassed by the People without Doors,

Doors, and will be condemned by some and applauded by others. A Gentleman who keeps Company with the former will from thence judge, that the Voice of the People is against the Government; and one who keeps Company with the latter will, for the same Reason, judge, that the Voice of the People is in Favour of the Government; consequently one of these Gentlemen would be for an Inquiry, and the other against it, for one and the same Reason; therefore, when such a Question happens to be started in this House, no Gentleman ought to consider what is the Voice of the People without Doors, nor ought he to allow what he has heard without Doors, in the least, to enter his Thoughts: If he does, he can hardly avoid being prejudiced by the Company he has kept, and such a Man can never be a good Judge in such a Question.

What then, Sir, are we to do? How are we to judge upon such Occasions? The Answer is easy: Every Gentleman ought to consider by himself the Measures pursued by the Government. If a general Inquiry be moved for, he ought to consider, or, perhaps, reconsider by himself, all the Measures that have been pursued by the Government during the Time proposed to be inquired into: If upon such an Examination he finds Reason to conclude, that they have been generally wrong, he ought then to agree to the Inquiry proposed: But if he finds Reason to conclude, that they were generally right, he ought to be against it: Nay, even when he finds Reason to condemn any one or two particular Measures, he ought to be against a general Inquiry; because after that Question is rejected, he may himself propose a particular Inquiry into the Affair he finds Reason to condemn or at least suspect, and that Question may

be agreed to by the House, notwithstanding our having rejected the former. But in such Cases I must observe, that according to the usual Custom of Parliament, we ought first by a proper Question to condemn the Measure, before we put any Question for inquiring into the Authors, or the Conduct of the Authors of any particular Measure.

Now, Sir, as the present Question is for a general Inquiry, and for a longer Time, I believe, than ever any former Inquiry was proposed to extend to, it will appear from what I have said, that every particular Gentleman must enter into the Examination of all the Measures pursued by our Government during that long Period; and therefore, I hope, it will not to be thought impertinent in me to enter into that Examination, or to endeavour to justify our publick Measures, especially such of them as have been particularly objected to in this Debate; and here I must previously observe, that in all such Cases we ought not to form our Judgment from the Light in which any past Measure now appears to us, but from the Light in which it did probably appear when it was at first resolved on; for considering the narrow Limits of human Wisdom or Knowledge, and the Shortness of human Foresight, future Incidents may often make a publick Measure appear to be wrong, tho' according to all human Appearance, it appeared at first to be right.

After having made this previous Observation, I must say, Sir, I am surprised to hear any Fault now found with the Measures that were taken for punishing the Guilty, and restoring publick Credit, after the violent Shock it received from the wicked Execution of the fatal South-Sea Scheme in the Year 1720; because future Incidents have been so far from condemning any of those Measures.

Measures, that the immediate Revival of publick Credit, and the flourishing State it has been in ever since, has fully demonstrated, that those Measures were wise as well as just. As to the Guilty, they were all punished, and, I think, severely A punished. They were not, perhaps, punished so severely as the Sufferers expected and desired; for it is natural for Men that have been injured, in the first Violence of their Resentment, to desire a Punishment more severe than common Justice can admit of; but they were all punished so severely, that when the first Violence of the publick Resentment was over, the Punishment began to be thought too severe, and was therefore, by Way of Ridicule, called *Justice by the Lump*.

The next Measure of a domestick Nature that seems to be objected to, is the Money granted from Time to Time to the Civil List, and the Additions that have been made to that Revenue. If there was any Crime in this, Sir, I must really think it lies more properly at our own Door, than at the Door of any Minister, or of the Administration in general; and therefore, before we agree to this Question, we ought, I think, to amend it, by resolving, That a Committee B be appointed to inquire into the Conduct of our Affairs, at home and abroad, and into the Conduct of the House of Commons, during the last twenty Years. But as none of those Grants were made, without having proper Estimates and Accounts laid before the House, and as from those Estimates and Accounts the Necessity of those Grants was made appear, we can have no Reason to find Fault either with our Ministers for asking, or with the House of Commons for granting any of the Sums of Money, or Additions that were made to the Civil List. And, indeed, if we consider, that there

are many accidental Charges which fall upon the Civil List Revenue, and many Articles which rise higher than that at which they were first estimated, we cannot be surprised, that in the late King's Time it became necessary from Time to Time to grant a Sum for paying off the Debts of the Civil List, or that his present Majesty's Ministers should desire to have an Addition made to it at his Accession to the Throne.

The Excise Scheme is another Affair of a domestick Nature, that seems to have been particularly objected to in this Debate. I know, Sir, that great Art and Industry were made use of to make People believe, that this Scheme was intended as an Introduction to a general Excise, and that it was a Preliminary to a formed Design for destroying our Constitution and making Slaves of us all. But as I had at that Time, and have had ever since, a Friendship and Intimacy with those who approved of that Scheme, and introduced it into this House, I know the Falshood of those Insinuations. However, I shall not desire Gentlemen to take my Word for it. I shall only desire Gentlemen to have a little Charity, and to judge of other Mens Actions and Intentions, as they would desire others to judge of their own. If they do this, they will not ascribe any Action to a wicked Motive, when an upright one can with more Probability be assigned; and this is evidently the Case with regard to the Excise Scheme. I hope, it will be granted, that to prevent Frauds in the Collection of the publick Taxes, and thereby increase the publick Revenue, is as upright, and even as laudable a Design as any Man can entertain; and, I believe, it will likewise be granted, that the Excise Scheme, had it been passed into a Law, would have had this Effect; at least it must be granted,

ed, that it was very reasonable to presume, it would have had this Effect, from the Experience we had before had of the Effect of raising the Duties upon Coffee, Tea, and Chocolate, by Way of Excise upon the Consumption, instead of raising them by the Method of Customs upon the Importation, and allowing those Customs to be drawn back upon the Exportation. This then was one Motive for approving of, and introducing the Excise Scheme, which must be allowed to have been an upright one; but on the other hand it is said, that this Scheme would have overturned our Constitution and established arbitrary Power, by giving Ministers an uncontrollable Influence at all Elections. That it would have had such an Effect I still very much question; and as our Ministers had no Experience of this in any parallel Case, they could not therefore be so certain of this Effect as of the other, consequently it is more probable, that their approving of, and introducing that Scheme proceeded from a good Intention, than that it proceeded from a wicked one; and I am sure, it is much more charitable, and more like a Christian, to suppose it proceeded from the former, than to suppose it proceeded from the latter. But let their Design be what it will, their throwing it up so easily as they did, was some Sort of Atonement, and induced most People to pardon the Attempt, which was the true Cause of the next general Election's going so much in their Favour; and it ought, I think, to be a Reason for its being never again mentioned in this House, especially as the Nation no Way suffered by the Attempt.

These, I think, Sir, are all the Measures of a domestick Nature for twenty Years past, that have been objected to in this Debate, and if Objections could have been raised a-

gainst any other, I believe, they would have been mentioned. Then with regard to Affairs of a foreign Nature, the Treaty of *Hanover* is, I find, by those Gentlemen always made the Burden of their Song, and the original Ground of all their Complaints; and in order to make this Treaty liable to any Objection, they who cannot know, expressly contradict what his late Majesty, who could and certainly did know, affirmed in the most solemn Manner from the Throne. His late Majesty in his Speech to the next Session of Parliament declared expressly, that the Negotiations and Engagements entered into by some foreign Powers, which seemed to have laid the Foundation of new Troubles and Disturbances in *Europe*, and to threaten his Subjects with the Loss of the most advantageous Branches of their Trade, obliged him, without any Loss of Time, to conclude that Treaty. It was then well known, what those Engagements were: They in part appeared even from the publick Treaty: The *Spaniards* were resolved to wrest *Gibraltar* and *Minorca* from us: The *Emperor* was resolved to support his *Ostend* Company in spite of us. For these Purposes they were to assist each other; and the King of *Spain*, as a farther Recompence, granted the *Emperor's* Subjects such Liberties and Privileges in both the *Indies* as were inconsistent with our Commerce, and with the Treaties subsisting between *Spain* and us. These were their Engagements, and if we did not submit, the *Emperor* was to attack his Majesty's foreign Dominions, whilst *Spain* was to make a Diversion by invading these Kingdoms in favour of the Pretender. The Court of *Vienna* went even so far as to threaten his late Majesty with both these Attacks, before he entered into that Negotiation which concluded with the Treaty of *Hanover*.

These are Facts, Sir, which are founded

founded upon the Testimony of our late Sovereign, I am sure, a much stronger Testimony than the Averment to the contrary of any private Gentleman; and these Facts will for ever justify the Treaty of *Hanover*, and all the Measures we took consequent to that Treaty, especially when we consider, that by those Measures we not only prevented the Dangers wherewith we were threatened, but obliged the *Emperor* to give up his *Ostend* Company, and *Spain* to confirm our Right to *Gibraltar* and *Minorca*, and to recede from her Engagements in Favour of the *Emperor's* Subjects with respect to Trade; both which she did by the Treaty of *Seville*, and therefore, I am surprised to hear that Treaty found fault with. We did not, 'tis true, by that Treaty, obtain immediate Satisfaction or Reparation for all the Damage she had done our Trade, because it was impossible to compute and ascertain that Damage; but we obtained a Promise for immediate Reparation as to some Part, and as to what remained it was to be settled and adjusted by Commissaries mutually to be appointed, who were to finish their Commission within the Space of three Years. If *Spain* afterwards refused to perform her Engagements, or rather delayed the Performance under frivolous Pretences, for she never expressly refused, it was what our Ministers could not foresee nor provide against; for without trusting to some Promises to be performed *in futuro*, it is impossible to negotiate or conclude any Treaty whatsoever.

But, Sir, with regard to *Spain's* Performance of these Promises, and with regard to the Depredations afterwards committed by *Spanish* *Guarda Costa's*, our Ministers cannot justly be accused of any Neglect, as may appear from the many Memorials, Letters and Papers relating to those Affairs, which have from Time to

Time been laid upon our Table: They never ceased making Application; the *Spanish* Ministers never ceased promising. If our Ministers were shy of beginning Hostilities, as long as they had any Hopes of obtaining Reparation by fair Means, are they to blame? Are the Ministers of a trading Nation ever to blame in such a Case? Sir, their Shiness in this Respect, especially with regard to *Spain*, ought to be the Ground of Applause rather than Inquiry: And in future Ages, when Time has put an End to Envy, which, thank God! is not so long-lived as Truth, it will appear to be so.

I now come, Sir, to consider our Behaviour when the War broke out between *France* and the *Emperor* in the Year 1733: In that War we had certainly no Concern in Interest, any farther than as it might affect the Balance of Power in *Europe*; and with regard to the Guaranty of the *Pragmatick Sanction*, we were set free from that Engagement by the *Emperor's* having brought that War upon himself: We had, therefore, no Concern, nor any Obligation to enter, either as Principals or Auxiliaries, into that War; but as by its Event, it might affect the Balance of Power, we were therefore in Prudence obliged to augment our Forces both by Sea and Land, in order to be ready to put a Stop to the Arms of the victorious Side, in case their Ambition should lead them to push their Conquests farther than was consistent with the Balance of Power in *Europe*. If we had delayed our Preparations till this Event had actually happened, we should then have been too late: The Vanquished would then have been obliged to submit, before we could have come to their Relief. Therefore, I still think, it was the most prudent Part we could act, to stand neuter at the

Beginning of that War, but to prepare for the worst; and our Allies the *Dutch*, whose Wisdom some Gentlemen take all Occasions to extol, held the very same Conduct: Nay, they went farther; they actually agreed to a Treaty of Neutrality, and yet notwithstanding that Agreement, they augmented their Forces, in order to be ready at all Events. By this Conduct we put ourselves but to a very small Expence, and yet that Expence had as good an Effect, as if we had put ourselves to a much greater, and brought ourselves into much greater Danger, by engaging as Parties in the War. The Parliament was therefore in the right to approve of those Measures; their having done so can be no Argument of their having been chosen or governed by a corrupt Influence; nor can those Measures, or the Approbation they then met with, now afford any reasonable Ground for a Parliamentary Inquiry.

The only remaining Measure that has been objected to in this Debate, and therefore the last I shall take Notice of, is the Convention with *Spain*, which was founded upon a Maxim I must still approve of, because it is such a one as, I hope, will always be held sacred by those who have the Administration of our publick Affairs, I mean that of never engaging us in a War, especially with *Spain*, as long as there is the least Reason to hope for obtaining Redress by peaceable Means. By that Treaty the King of *Spain* acknowledged the Injuries that had been done us, and promised to make Satisfaction, by paying a certain Sum here at *London* in the Space of four Months: This was such a Proof of that Court's being in Earnest, and firmly resolved to do us Justice, that our Ministers, upon the Maxim I have mention'd, could not but agree to it; and as we were neither to promise nor give up any Thing by

that Treaty, they had the more Reason to accept of what the Court of *Spain* offered. If the Court of *Spain* delayed performing that Engagement, as they had done their former, our agreeing to this Treaty could occasion no Delay in our beginning Hostilities, but what would have been otherwise occasioned by the Season of the Year; and their failing in the Performance of such a solemn and explicit Stipulation, would of course render them blamable in the Eyes of all *Europe*, which, considering the Intricacy of the other Disputes between the two Nations, was a Point our Ministers were in the Right to aim at, and has, perhaps, been the principal Cause of *Spain's* remaining hitherto unassisted by any Power in *Europe*. This Measure, therefore, or the Approbation it met with in Parliament, can as little afford a just Cause for an Inquiry, as any other that has been mentioned in this Debate; and now I hope it will appear, that we have at present no solid Ground for an Inquiry, from the supposed Weakness or Wickedness of any of our late Measures.

If a Minister, or an Administration, are to be compared to the Steward of an Estate, we shall from thence find as little Reason for an Inquiry; nay, upon this Principle, it would be unjust in us to call them now to a general Account. If the Steward of an Estate passes his Accounts regularly, and delivers up his Vouchers every Year, and accordingly receives an annual Discharge or Release, it would be most unjust in his Lord to expect or desire, that after twenty Years Service he should be brought to a general Account, as if no such annual Account had ever been delivered or approved of. This is exactly the Case of our Administration; they have regularly every Year delivered in their Accounts; those Accounts have been annually passed

passed in Parliament, and every Article approved of; would it not then be unjust in us now after twenty Years to tell them, we will now overhale all your Accounts? The Accounts you have delivered in, the Approbation you have met with, the Releases you have received, shall pass for nothing: You shall now deliver in a general Account from your first Entry into our Service: We will examine it strictly, and will admit of no Article but what you can fully instruct to have been usefully laid out or expended for our Service. Such a Proceeding would be so unjust, that I cannot think, it needs any farther Explanation.

But now, Sir, with regard to the other Question, Whether it be now a proper Time for us to enter into an Inquiry? Suppose we had just Ground to suspect the Uprightness or the Wisdom of our late Measures: Suppose them to be thought weak or wicked by a great Majority of this House, is this a proper Time for us to employ ourselves about inquiring into and punishing past Measures? When *Europe* is in such Danger: When we ourselves are in such Danger, are we to consider only how we came upon the Brink, instead of considering how to get off? It was said of the House of Commons that impeached the Earl of *Portland* and Lord *Somers* in the Year 1701, that they proceeded in a Manner which seemed more to affect our Peace at home, than to prepare for War abroad. I am sure, this might be more justly said of us, should we now resolve upon an Inquiry into the late Conduct of our publick Affairs. Let us now think how to get rid of the present Danger, and of that alone. It deserves, it requires our utmost Attention: When we have secured our own Liberties, and the Liberties of *Europe*, against the ambitious Projects of *France*: When we have secured the

Freedom of our Navigation and Commerce against the Insults and Injustice of *Spain*; we shall then have an Opportunity, we shall then have Leisure, to inquire into and punish all publick Offenders, and we may then do it with Safety. Both these desirable Ends we shall, I hope, attain, if we apply to this, and this only: We may, perhaps, be able to accomplish both before the Beginning of next Session of Parliament; and surely no one will say, we can suffer in the mean Time by the Delay of Justice. For this Reason, Sir, if I thought we had just Cause for an Inquiry: If I condemned, in my own Mind, the whole Course of our Conduct for the last twenty Years, as much as I do really approve it, I should nevertheless be against our entering into an Inquiry, during this Session of Parliament; and therefore, I must give my Negative to the Question.

The last Speech I shall give in this Debate, was that made by Julius Florus, the Purport of which was as follows, viz.

*Mr. President,
S I R,*

WHAT the Gentlemen of the other Side mean by Harangues or Flowers of Rhetorick, I shall not pretend to guess; but if they make use of nothing of that Kind, it is no very good Argument for their Sincerity; for a Man who speaks from his Heart, and is sincerely affected with the Subject he speaks on, as every honest Man must, when he speaks in the Cause of his Country: Such a Man, I say, falls naturally into Sentiments and Expressions which may be called Flowers of Rhetorick, and therefore deserves as little to be taxed with Affectation, as the most stupid Serjeant at Law that ever spoke at the Common Pleas Bar for a half Guinea Fee. For my

Part, I have heard nothing said in this Debate, at least, I have heard nothing said in Favour of the Question, but what I thought very proper and very much to the Purpose. What has been said, indeed, upon the other Side of the Question, especially the long Justification that has been made of our late Measures, I cannot think so proper upon this Occasion, because this Motion is founded upon the present melancholy Situation of Affairs, and upon the general Clamour without Doors against the late Conduct of our publick Affairs; and either of these, with me, shall always be a sufficient Reason for agreeing to an immediate Parliamentary Inquiry: for without such an Inquiry I cannot, even in my own Mind, enter into the Disquisition, whether our publick Measures have been right or no, because I cannot otherwise be furnished with the necessary Lights for that Purpose.

But the Hon. Gentlemen who oppose this Motion, seem to mistake, I shall not say wilfully, the Difference between a Motion for an Impeachment, and a Motion for an Inquiry. If any Member of this House were to stand up in his Place, and move for impeaching a Minister, he would be obliged to charge him with some particular Crimes or Misdemeanors, and to produce some Proof, or to declare that he was ready to prove the Facts; but any Gentleman may move for an Inquiry, without any particular Allegation, and without offering any Proof, or declaring that he is ready to prove, because the very Design of an Inquiry is to find out particular Facts and particular Proofs. The general Circumstances of Things, or general Rumours without Doors, are a sufficient Foundation for such a Motion, and for the House's agreeing to it when it is made. This, Sir, has always been the Practice, and has been the Founda-

tion of almost all the Inquiries that were ever set on Foot in this House, especially those that have been carried on by Secret and Select Committees. What other Foundation was there for the Secret Committee appointed in the Year 1694, (to go no farther back) to inquire into and inspect the Books and Accounts of the *East-India* Company and Chamber of *London*? Nothing but a general Rumour that some corrupt Practices had been made use of. What was the Foundation of the Inquiry in the Year 1715? Did the Hon. Gentleman who moved for appointing that Secret Committee, charge the former Administration with any particular Crimes? Did he offer any Proofs, or declare that he was ready to prove any Thing? It is said, the Measures pursued by that Administration were condemned by a great Majority of that House of Commons. What, Sir, were those Ministers condemned before they were heard? Could any Gentleman be so unjust as to pass Sentence, even in his own Mind, upon a Measure, before he had inquired into it? He might perhaps dislike the Treaty of *Utrecht*; but upon Inquiry, it might appear to be the best that could be obtained; and it has since been so far justified, that it is at least as good, if not better than any Treaty we have made since that Time.

Sir, it was not the Treaty of *Utrecht*, nor any Measure that Administration had openly pursued, that was the Foundation or the Cause of an Inquiry into their Conduct. It was the loud Complaints of a great Party in the Nation against them, and the general Suspicion of their having carried on treasonable Negotiations in Favour of the Pretender, and for defeating the Protestant Succession; and the Inquiry was set on Foot, in order to detect those Practices, if there were any such, and to find proper Evidence for convicting

ing the Offenders. The same Argument holds with regard to the Inquiry into the Management of the Directors of the *South-Sea* Company in the Year 1720. When that Affair was first moved in the House by Mr. *Neville*, he did not, he could not charge those Directors, or any one of them, with any particular Crimes, nor did he attempt to offer, or say that he was ready to offer any particular Proofs: His Motion, which was, That the Directors of the *South-Sea* Company should forthwith lay before the House an Account of their Proceedings, was founded upon the general Circumstances of Things, the Distress brought upon the publick Credit of the Nation, and the general and loud Complaints without Doors. This Motion, indeed, reasonable as it was, we know, was opposed by our Courtiers at that Time, and in particular, by two doughty Brothers, who have been Courtiers ever since; but their Opposition raised such a Warmth in the House, that they were glad to give it up, and never afterwards durst directly oppose that Inquiry. I wish, I could now see the same Zeal for publick Justice. I am sure, the Circumstances of Affairs deserve it. Our publick Credit was then, indeed, brought into Distress; but now, the Nation itself, nay, not only this Nation, but all our Friends upon the Continent, are brought into the utmost Distress and Danger.

This, Sir, is admitted even by those who oppose this Motion, and if they have ever lately conversed with those that dare speak their Minds, they must admit, that the Murmurs of the People against the Conduct of the Administration are now as general, and as loud, as ever they were upon any Occasion; but the Misfortune is, that Gentlemen who are in Office, seldom converse with any but such as are in Office, or want to be in Office, and such Men,

let them think what they will, will always applaud the Conduct of their Superiors; consequently, Gentlemen who are in the Administration, or in any Office under it, can rarely know what is the Voice of the People. The Voice of this House was formerly, I shall grant, and always ought to be the Voice of the People: If new Parliaments were more frequent, and few Placemen, and no Pensioners admitted, it would be so still; but, if long Parliaments be continued, and a corrupt Influence should prevail, not only at Elections, but in this House, the Voice of this House will generally be very different from, nay often directly contrary to the Voice of the People. However, as this is not, I hope, the Case at present, I must hope, that there is a Majority of us who know what is the Voice of the People; and if it be admitted by all, that the Nation is at present in the utmost Distress and Danger, and admitted by a Majority, that the Voice of the People is loud against the late Conduct of our Administration, this Motion must be agreed to, because, I have shewn, that these two Circumstances, without any particular Charge, have been the Foundation of almost all Parliamentary Inquiries.

I shall readily admit, Sir, that we should have very little to do with the Character or Reputation of a Minister, if it no way affected his Master; but as it does, and always must affect our Sovereign, as the People may become disaffected as well as discontented, when they find, the King continues obstinately to employ a Minister who, they think, oppresses them at home, and betrays them abroad, we are therefore, in Duty to our Sovereign, obliged to inquire into the Conduct of a Minister, when it becomes generally suspected by the People; in order that we may vindicate his Character,

if

if he appears innocent, as to every Thing laid to his Charge, or that we may get him removed from the Councils of our Sovereign, and condignly punished, if he appears guilty.

After having said thus much, Sir, I have no great Occasion to answer what has been said, that no Parliamentary Inquiry ought ever to be set up, unless we are convinced that something has been done amiss. Sir, the very Name given to this House of Parliament shews the contrary. We are called the Grand Inquest of the Nation, and as such it is our Duty to inquire into every Step of publick Management, either abroad or at home, in order to see that nothing has been done amiss. It is not necessary upon every Occasion to establish a Secret Committee: This is never necessary, but when the Affairs to be brought before them, or some of those Affairs, are supposed to be of such a Nature as ought to be kept secret; but as Experience has shewn, that nothing but a superficial Inquiry is ever made by a general Committee, or a Committee of the whole House, I wish, that all Estimates and Accounts, and many other Affairs, were respectively referred to Select Committees. Their Inquiries would be more exact, and the receiving of their Reports would not take up so much of our Time as is represented; but if it did, as it is our Duty to make strict Inquiries into every Thing relating to the Publick, as we assemble here for that Purpose, we ought to do our Duty before we break up, and I am sure, his present Majesty would never put an End to any Session, till both Houses had fully performed their Duty to their Country.

Having thus shewn, Sir, that it is our Duty to inquire, even when there is no Cause, no Complaints, and that it is much more our Duty to inquire into the Conduct of pub-

lick Affairs, when there is great Distress and heavy Complaints, I shall endeavour to answer the two chief Objections that have been made against the Inquiry now proposed. It is said, that by this Inquiry we shall be in Danger of discovering the Secrets of our Government to our Enemies. This Argument, Sir, by proving too much proves nothing at all. If it were admitted, it would always have been, and for ever will be, an Argument against our inquiring into any Affair in which our Government can be supposed to have a Concern. Our Inquiries would then be confined to the Conduct of our little Companies, or of inferior Custom-House Officers or Excisemen; for if we should be so bold as to offer to inquire into the Conduct of Commissioners or great Companies, it would be said, the Government had a Concern in their Conduct, and the Secrets of Government must not be divulged. Every Gentleman must see, that this would be the Consequence of admitting such an Argument; but besides, it is false in Fact, and contrary to Experience. We have had many Parliamentary Inquiries into the Conduct of Ministers of State, and yet I defy any one to shew, that any State Affair was thereby discovered which ought to have been concealed, or that our publick Affairs, either abroad or at home, ever suffered by any such Discovery. There are Methods, Sir, for preventing Papers of a very secret Nature from coming into the Hands of the Servants attending, or even of all the Members of our Secret Committee. If his Majesty should by Message acquaint us, that some of the Papers sealed up and laid before us required the utmost Secrecy, we might refer them to our Committee, with an Instruction for them to order only two or three of their

Number to inspect such Papers, and to report from them nothing but what they thought might be safely communicated to their whole Number. By this Method, I hope, the Danger of a Discovery would be effectually removed; therefore this Danger cannot be a good Argument against a parliamentary Inquiry.

The other Objection, Sir, is really surprising, because it is founded upon a Circumstance which, in all former Times, has been admitted as a strong Argument for an immediate Inquiry. The Hon. Gentlemen are so ingenuous as to confess, that our Affairs both abroad and at home, are at present in the utmost Distress; but say they, you ought to free yourselves from this Distress, before you inquire how or by what Means you was brought into it. Sir, according to this Way of arguing, a Minister that has plundered and betrayed his Country, and fears being called to an Account in Parliament, has nothing to do but to involve his Country into a dangerous War, or some other great Distress, in order to prevent an Inquiry into his Conduct, because he may be dead before that War is at an End, or that Distress got over. Thus, like the most villainous of all Thieves, after he has plundered the House, he has nothing to do but to set it in a Flame, that he may escape in the Confusion. It is really astonishing to hear such an Argument seriously urged in this House. But say these Gentlemen, if you found yourself upon a Precipice, would you stand to inquire how you was led there, before you considered how to get off? No, Sir; but if a Guide had led me there, I should very probably be provoked to throw him over, before I thought of any Thing else; at least, I am sure, I should not trust to the same Guide for bringing me off; and this, Sir, is the strongest Argument that can

be urged for an immediate Inquiry.

We have been for these twenty Years under the Guidance, I may truly say, of one Man, one single Minister. We now at last find ourselves upon a most dangerous Precipice: Ought not we then immediately to inquire, whether we have been led upon this Precipice by his Ignorance or Wickedness? And if by either, to take Care not to trust to his Guidance for leading us off? This is an additional, and a stronger Argument for this Inquiry than ever was for any former; for if we do not inquire, we shall probably remain under his Guidance; because, tho' he be removed from the Treasury Board, he is not from the King's Closet, nor probably will, unless it be by our Advice, or by our sending him to a Lodging at the other End of the Town, where he cannot do so much Harm to his Country. Sir, the Distress we are in at home is evidently owing to bad Economy, and to our having been led into many needless Expences: The Distress and the Danger we are in abroad, are evidently owing to the Misconduct of our War with Spain, and to the little Confidence put in our Counsels by our natural and ancient Allies. This is so evident, that I should not have thought it necessary to have entered into any particular Explanation, if an Hon. Gentleman on the other Side had not entered into a particular Justification of most of our late Measures, both abroad and at home; but as he has done so, tho' not, in my Opinion, quite to the Purpose of the present Debate, yet, I hope, I shall be excused making some Remarks upon what he has said on that Subject, beginning, as he did, with the Measures taken for punishing the *South-Sea* Directors, and restoring publick Credit, after the terrible Shock it met with in the Year 1720. How is it possible

As those Measures, Sir, were among the first Exploits of our late, and I fear still our Prime Minister, at least his first since he came last into the Administration; and as the Committee proposed, if agreed to, will probably consist of one and twenty, I wish the Motion had been for one Year farther back, that the Number of Years might have been equal to the Number of Inquirers, and that it might have comprehended the first of those Measures; for as it stands, it will not comprehend the Methods taken for punishing the Directors, nor the first Regulations made for restoring publick Credit; and with regard to both, some Practices might perhaps be discovered, that would deserve a much severer Punishment than any of those Directors met with. Considering the many Tricks and Frauds made use of by those Directors and their Agents, for drawing People into their Ruin, I am not a little surprised to hear it now said, that their Punishment was ever thought too severe. Justice by the Lump was an Epithet given it, not because it was thought too severe; but because it was a Piece of Cunning made use of for screening the most heinous Offenders, who, if they did not deserve to be hanged, deserved at least to have that total Ruin brought upon them, which they had brought upon many unthinking Men, and therefore they very ill deserved those Allowances that were made them by Parliament.

Then, Sir, as to the restoring of publick Credit, its speedy Restoration was founded upon the Credit of the Nation, and not upon the Wisdom or Justice of the Measures taken to restore it. Was it a wise Method to remit to the South-Sea Company the whole *seven Millions*, or thereabout, which they had solemnly engaged to pay to the Publick? It might as well be said, that

a private Man's giving away a great Part of his Estate to those that no Way deserved it, would be a wise Method for reviving or establishing his Credit. If those *seven Millions* had been distributed among the poorer Sort of Annuitants, it would have been both generous and charitable; but to give it among the Proprietors in general, was neither generous nor just, because most of them deserved no Favour from the Publick: For as the Proceedings of the Directors were authorised by General Courts, those who were then the Proprietors were in some Measure accessory to the Frauds of the Directors, and therefore deserved to have been punished, rather than rewarded, as they really were; because every one of them who continued to hold Stock in that Company got, by the Regulations then made, near 50 per Cent. added to his Capital; most Part of which arose from the high Price the Annuitants were by Act of Parliament obliged to take Stock at, and was therefore a most flagrant Piece of Injustice done to the Annuitants. But we need not be at a Loss for the true Cause of this Act of Injustice, when we consider, that a certain Gentleman had a great many Friends among the old Stockholders, and few or none among the Annuitants.

Another Act of Injustice which, I believe, we may ascribe to the same Cause, relates to those who were engag'd in heavy Contracts for Stock or Subscriptions, many of whom groan under the Load to this very Day; for after we had by Act of Parliament quite altered the Nature, though not the Name of the Stock they had bought, and made it much less valuable, than it was when they engaged to pay a high Price for it, I must think, it was an Act of publick Injustice, to leave them liable to be prosecuted at Law for

for the whole Money they had engaged to pay; and I am sure, it was not a Method for restoring private Credit, upon which our Trade and Navigation very much depend. If the same Regulation had been made with regard to them, as was made with regard to those who had borrowed Money of the Company, or a Sort of *Uri possidetis* enacted, by declaring all such Contracts void, so far as related to any future Payments, it would not have been unjust, and was extremely necessary for quieting the Minds of the People, for preventing their ruining one another at Law, and for restoring Credit between Man and Man; which is so necessary in a trading Country; but there is Reason to suppose, that a certain Gentleman

Then, Sir, with regard to the extraordinary Grants made to the Civil List, the very Reason given by the Hon. Gentleman for justifying those Grants, is a strong Reason for an immediate Inquiry. If there have arisen any considerable Charges upon that Revenue, let us see what those Charges were; let us examine whether or no they were necessary. We have the more Reason to do this, because the Revenue settled upon his late Majesty's Civil List, was at least as great as was settled either upon King *William* or Queen *Anne*, and yet neither of them ever asked any extraordinary Grant, but on the contrary, the latter gave out of her Civil List Revenue 100,000 *l.* yearly, towards the Support of the War, and yet there was as great Hospitality in the Royal Palace during her Time, as there has been ever since. Besides, there is a general Rumour without Doors, that the

Civil List is now greatly in Arrear, which, if true, renders an Inquiry absolutely necessary; for it is inconsistent with the Honour and Dignity of the Crown of these Kingdoms to be in Arrear to its Tradesmen and Servants; and it is the Duty of this House to take care, that the Revenue we have settled for supporting the Honour and Dignity of our Crown, shall not be squandered or misapplied: If former Parliaments have failed in this Respect, they must be blamed, tho' they cannot be punished; but we ought now to atone for their Neglect, and we may punish those, if they can be discovered, who were the Cause of it.

I come now in course to the Excise-Scheme, which the Hon. Gentleman says, ought to be forgiven, because it was easily given up. Sir, it was not easily given up. The Promoter of that Scheme did not easily give it up; he gave it up with Sorrow, with Tears in his Eyes, when he saw, and not till he saw it impossible to carry it through the House. Did not his Majority decrease upon every Division? It was almost certain, that if he had pushed it any farther, the Majority would have turned against him. His Sorrow shewed his Disappointment; and his Disappointment shewed, that his Design was higher than that of preventing Frauds in the Customs. He was at that Time so sensible of the Influence of Excise Laws and Excisemen with regard to Elections, and of the great Occasion he would have for that Sort of Influence at the next general Election, which was then approaching, that it is impossible to suppose, he had not that Influence in View, and if he had, it was a most wicked Attempt against our Constitution; therefore he deserved the Treatment he met with from the People. Perhaps, there were none but what Gentlemen are pleased to call the Mob,

concerned in burning him in Effigy; but as the Mob consists of Children, Journeymen and Servants, and as they always speak the Sentiments of their Parents and Masters, and are much more free in their Expressions, we are from them to judge of the Sentiments of the better Sort of People.

The Hon. Gentleman said, these were all the Measures of a domestick Nature, that could be found fault with, because none other were mentioned in this Debate. Sir, he has already heard a Reason why no wrong Measures should be particularly mentioned in this Debate: If it were necessary, many others might be mentioned. Is not the keeping up of so numerous an Army in Time of Peace to be found fault with? Is not the fitting out so many expensive Squadrons for no Purpose to be found fault with? Are not the Incroachments made upon the Sinking Fund, the reviving the Salt-Duty, the rejecting many useful Bills and Motions in Parliament, and many other domestick Measures, to be found fault with? The Weakness or Wickedness of those Measures has been often demonstrated, their ill Consequences were at the respective Times foretold, and those Consequences are now become visible by the present Distress we are in.

Now, Sir, with regard to the foreign Measures, which the Hon. Gentleman has attempted to justify. The Treaty of *Hanover* deserves indeed to be first mentioned, because from thence springs the Danger, which *Europe* is now exposed to; and it is impossible to assign a Reason for our entering into that Treaty, without supposing that we then resolved to be revenged of the *Emperors* for refusing to grant us some Favour in *Germany*. It is in vain now to insist upon the secret Engagements entered into by the Courts of *Vienna* and *Madrid*, as

the Cause of that Treaty. Time has fully shewn, that there never were any such Engagements; and his late Majesty's Speech from the Throne cannot here be admitted as any Evidence of the Fact. Every one knows, that in Parliament the King's Speech is always considered as the Speech of the Minister; and surely a Minister is not to be allowed to bring his own Speech as an Evidence of a Fact in his own Justification. If it be pretended, that his late Majesty had some Sort of Information, that such Engagements had been entered into, that very Pretence furnishes an unanswerable Argument for an Inquiry; for as the Information now appears to have been groundless, we ought to inquire into it, because, if it appears to be such an Information as ought not to have been believed, that Minister ought to be punished, who advised his late Majesty to give Credit to it, and to run the Nation into such pernicious Measures in Consequence of it.

At the Time this Treaty was entered into, we wanted nothing from the *Emperor* upon our own Account. The abolishing of the *Ostend* Company was a Demand we had no Right to make, nor were we in Interest much obliged to insist upon it, because that Company would have been more prejudicial to the Interest both of the *French* and *Dutch East-India* Trade, than to ours; and if it had been a Point that concern'd us much, we might probably have gained it by acceding to the *Vienna* Treaty between the *Emperor* and *Spain*, or by guarantying the *Pragmatick Sanction*, which we afterwards did in the most absolute Manner, without any Consideration at all. We wanted nothing from *Spain* but a Departure from the Pretence she had just begun, or, I believe, hardly begun to set up in an expressive Manner, with regard to searching and

and seizing our Ships in the *American* Seas; and this we did not obtain, or perhaps did not desire to obtain by the Treaty of *Seville*. By that Treaty we obtained nothing, but we made another Step towards bringing on that Danger which *Europe* is now involved in, by uniting the Courts of *France* and *Spain*, and laying a Foundation for a new Breach between the Courts of *Spain* and *Vienna*.

I shall grant, Sir, our Ministers appear to have been fond and diligent enough in negotiating, and writing Letters and Memorials to the Court of *Spain*; but by all I have look'd into, it appears, they never rightly understood, or perhaps would not understand the Point they were negotiating about; and as they suffered themselves to be amused, as they say, with fair Promises, for ten Years together, whilst in the mean Time our Merchants were plundered, and our Trade interrupted, we ought to inquire into this Affair; for if it should appear, that they allowed themselves to be amused with such Answers, as no Man of Honour in such Circumstances would have taken, nor any Man of common Sense been amused with, they must have had some secret Motive for allowing themselves to be thus amused; this secret Motive we may perhaps discover by an Inquiry, and as it must be a wicked one, if it can be discovered, they ought to be severely punished.

But in Excuse for their Conduct it is said, our Ministers had a laudable Shiness of involving their Country in a War. Sir, this Shiness could not proceed from any Regard to their Country: It was involved in a War: *Spain* was carrying on a War against our Trade, and that in the most insulting Manner too, during the whole Time of their Negotiations. It was this very Shiness, or at least their making the

Court of *Spain* too sensible of it, that at last made it absolutely necessary for us to begin a War on our Side. If they had at first insisted properly and peremptorily upon an explicit Answer, *Spain* would have expressly given up the Pretence she had just set up; but by the long Experience we allowed her, she found the Fruits of that Pretence so plentiful and favourable, that she thought them worth risking a War for, and the Damage we had suffered became so considerable, that it was worth contending for. Besides, the Court of *Spain* were convinced, that whilst we were under such an Administration, nothing could provoke us to begin the War on our Side, or if we did, that it would be managed weakly or pusillanimously; and have we not since found, that they formed a right Judgment? Nothing, Sir, ever demanded more a Parliamentary Inquiry than our Conduct in this War. The only Branch of it we have inquired into, we have already censured and condemned: Is not this a good Reason for inquiring into every other Branch? Disappointment and ill Success have always, till now, occasion'd a Parliamentary Inquiry. Inactivity of itself is a sufficient Cause for an Inquiry. We have now all these Reasons concurring. Our Admirals abroad desire nothing more; because they are conscious, that our Inactivity and ill Success would appear not to be owing to their Conduct, but to the Conduct of those that sent them out.

I cannot conclude, Sir, without taking notice of the two other foreign Measures mentioned by the Hon. Gentleman. Our Conduct in the Year 1734, with regard to the War between the *Emperor* and *France*, may be easily accounted for, though not easily excused. Ever since the last Accession of our late Minister

to Power, we seem to have had a Spite against the House of *Austria*. Our Guaranty of the *Pragmatick Sanction* was an Effect of that Spite; because we entered into it, when, as has since appeared, we had no Mind to perform our Engagement; and by that sham Guaranty got the *Emperor* to admit of the Introduction of *Spanish* Troops into *Italy*, which he would not otherwise have done. The Preparations we made in that Year, the Armies we raised, and the Fleets we fitted out, were not to guard against the Event of the War abroad, but against the Event of the ensuing Elections at home. The new Commissions, the Promotions, and the Money laid out on those Preparations, were of excellent Use at the Time of a general Election, and in some Measure atoned for the Loss of the Excise-Scheme; but *France* and her Allies were well convinced, that we would in no Event declare against them, otherwise they would not have dar'd to attack the *Emperor* at that Time; for *Muscovy*, *Poland*, *Germany*, and *Britain*, would have been by much an Over-match for them. It was not our Preparations that set Bounds to the Ambition of *France*, but her getting all she wanted at that Time for herself, and all she desired for her Allies. Her own Prudence directed her, that it was not then a proper Time to push her Views farther; because she did not know, but that the Spirit of this Nation might get the better, as it has since done with regard to *Spain*, of the Spirit of our Administration; and if this should have happened, the House of *Austria* was then in such a Condition, that our Assistance, even tho' late, would have been of effectual Service.

I am surpris'd, Sir, to hear the Hon. Gentleman now say, that we gave up nothing, or got any Thing by our infamous Convention with

Spain. Did not we give up the Freedom of our Trade and Navigation, by submitting it to be regulated by Plenipotentiaries? Can Freedom be regulated without being confined, and consequently in some Part destroyed? Did not we give up *Georgia*, or some Part of it, by submitting to have new Limits settled by Plenipotentiaries? Did not we give up all the Reparation of Honour we had so just a Title to insist on? Did not we give up all Reparation of the Damage we had suffered, amounting to 5 or 600,000 *l.* for the paltry Sum of 27,000 *l.*? For this was all *Spain* promised to pay, after deducting the 68,000 *l.* which we, by the Declaration annexed to that Treaty, allowed her to insist on having from our *South-Sea* Company, under the Penalty of stripping them of the *Assiento* Contract, and all the Privileges they were thereby intitled to. Even this Sum of 27,000 *l.* or more, they had before acknowledged to be due, on account of Ships they had allowed to have been unjustly taken, and had actually sent Orders for their Restitution: So that by this infamous Treaty we got nothing, and gave up every Thing; and therefore, in my Opinion, the Honour of this Nation can never be retrieved, unless the Advisers and Authors of it be censured and punished, which cannot regularly be done without a Parliamentary Inquiry.

By these and the like wicked, or weak and pusillanimous Measures, we are become the Ridicule of every Court in *Europe*, and have lost the Confidence of all our antient Allies: By these we have encouraged *France* to extend her ambitious Views, and now at last to attempt carrying them into Execution. By bad Economy and Extravagance in our domestick Measures, we have brought ourselves into such Distress at home, that we are almost utterly incapable

incapable of entering into a War: By Weakness or Wickedness in our foreign Measures, we have brought the Affairs of *Europe* into such Distress, that it is almost impossible for us to avoid entering into a War. By these Means we have been brought upon the dangerous Precipice on which we now find ourselves; and shall we trust our being led safely off to the same Guide that has led us on? Sir, it is impossible for him to lead us off; it is impossible for us to get off, without first recovering that Confidence among our anti-ent Allies which this Nation formerly used to have: This we cannot do as long as they suppose, that our Counsels are influenced by our late Minister; and this they will suppose, as long as he has Access to the King's Closet, and his past Conduct remains uninquired into and uncensured. It is not therefore Revenge for past Sufferings, but a Desire to prevent future, that makes me so sanguine for this Inquiry. His Punishment, let it be never so severe, will be but a small Atonement to his Country for what is past; but his Impunity will be the Source of many future Miseries to *Europe*, as well as to his native Country. Let us be as merciful as we will, as any Man can reasonably desire, when we come to pronounce Sentence; but Sentence we must pronounce, and for this Purpose we must inquire, unless we are resolved to sacrifice our own Liberties, and the Liberties of *Europe*, to the Preservation of one Guiltman.

The other Debate of the same Nature, which happened in our Club, March 23, was likewise begun by Licinius Menenius, who upon this Occasion spoke in Substance thus:

Mr. President,
S I R,

Notwithstanding the bad Success of my last Motion for in-

quiring into the late Conduct of our publick Affairs, it shall not discourage me from offering you another of the same Nature; because, I think, our making some Sort of Inquiry, during this Session of Parliament, absolutely necessary for quieting the Minds of the People, and for restoring, in some Degree, the Character and Credit of our Government. What Sort of Company some Gentlemen may keep, I do not know; but to me who keep all Sorts of Company, the Disappointment upon the former Motion's being rejected, appeared evident in the Face of every Man, who had not Reason, upon his own Account, or the Account of some of his Friends, to dread the Consequences of that Inquiry. And whatever we may think within Doors, it will be thought without, nay, it is now generally said, that if some People were not conscious of their own Guilt, they would not so vigorously oppose an Inquiry; for an innocent Man, when he finds himself accused or suspected, will always desire to be brought to a fair and legal Trial, that he may have an Opportunity to vindicate his Character against those Whispers that are spread about against it. This, Sir, is the Language now held without Doors, and the certain Consequence will be, that if we let this Session pass over without any Inquiry, it will be said, that a Majority of us have been Partakers in the Guilt, and Partners in the Plunder of our Country.

From hence, Sir, I must hope, that every innocent Man in this House, and now that one Man is gone from amongst us, I hope, all of us are so, will be for the Question I am now to propose, because I have taken Care to prevent its being liable to the two chief Objections that seemed to prevail against my last Motion. These were, its being

being too extensive as to Time, and too extensive as to Matter. An Inquiry for twenty Years back was thought to be without Precedent, and that it would be such a Precedent as might be of dangerous Consequence in future Times. This was one of the chief Objections against it, and an Objection which, I believe, had Weight with some whose Concurrence I hope to be favoured with in this Motion. And the other Objection was, its comprehending all our foreign as well as our domestick Affairs, which must of course have brought all the Papers relating to our foreign Negotiations before our Committee. To this it was objected, that it would endanger the Discovery of some of the most important Secrets of our Government to our Enemies, which might be of the most fatal Consequence now that we are engaged in one War, and in great likelihood of being soon obliged to engage in another. This likewise seemed to have Weight, and, I believe, prevailed with some Gentlemen to be against my former Motion, for which Reason I shall now only move, *That a Committee be appointed to inquire into the Conduct of Robert Earl of Orford, during the last Ten Years of his being First Commissioner of the Treasury, and Chancellor and Under Treasurer of his Majesty's Exchequer.*

Sir, I hope the Time of Inquiry proposed by this Motion will not be thought too extensive; for considering the chief Crime of a domestick Nature, he has been accused of, our Inquiry cannot, I think, be confined within narrower Bounds. The Crime I mean, is that of applying not only all the Favours of the Crown, but even the publick Money, towards gaining a corrupt Influence at Elections and in Parliament. This he is generally accused of by the Voice of the People with-

out Doors, and, I believe, there is not a Gentleman in this House that has been chosen in Opposition to what was called the Court Interest, who was not sensible of some such Practices being carried on against him, before and at the Time of his Election. Every Gentleman must be sensible, that it is very difficult to fix such Practices upon a Minister, because they are not only carried on in a hidden Manner, but by Tools and under Agents, who do not appear at the Election as Agents for the Minister, but as Agents for the Court Candidate; and generally spend their Money very freely, tho' it is often known, that neither they nor their Candidate had ever any Money of their own to spare. Nay, those Agents are often known to be Treasury Agents, tho' in the common Course of Justice it is impossible to prove that they are. It will even be difficult for a Committee of this House, with all the Powers we can give them, to trace this Practice up to its original Source; but, considering the general Suspicion without Doors, and the many strong Reasons there are for believing that Suspicion to be well grounded, we ought certainly to aim at it; and if we do, we cannot begin later than the Time when canvassing may be supposed to have begun for the chusing of last Parliament, which, I reckon, was about ten Years ago; for as that Parliament was chosen in the Summer 1734, we must suppose that the Candidates, especially where there was like to be an Opposition, begun to take Measures for securing their Interest in the Summer 1732, which will just come within the Term of ten Years, computing back from this Time.

For this Reason, I hope this will appear to be the shortest Time I could move for; and as it is much shorter than the Time proposed by my last Motion, I hope, I shall have the

the Concurrence of many Gentlemen who then appeared against me, especially as I have likewise in this taken Care to obviate the other Objection, of its being too extensive as to the Matters proposed to be inquired into; for as this noble Lord had by none of his Offices any Thing to do with foreign Affairs, this Motion cannot be said to relate to, or comprehend any Affairs of that Nature, unless it be supposed, that this Minister directed every other Branch of publick Business, as well as that of the Treasury, which, I am sure, none of his Friends will pretend to say, because this would be as great a Crime as any he is accused of. This Motion cannot therefore be supposed to relate to any foreign Affair, and, consequently, an Inquiry into this Nobleman's Conduct, cannot be supposed to endanger the Discovery of any of the Secrets of our Government. Nay, if he, whilst he was in Office, confined himself to the Duty of his Office, our Inquiry, in pursuance of this Motion, can comprehend but one Branch even of our domestick Affairs, and that Branch too, which, of all others, has the least to do with our foreign Affairs. An Inquiry into the Conduct of a Secretary of State, a Secretary at War, a Commissioner of the Admiralty, or even the Lord High Chancellor, might be said to have some Relation to foreign Affairs; but I cannot suggest to myself what a Commissioner of the Treasury can have to do with foreign Affairs, or how an Inquiry into his Conduct can have the least Relation to any foreign Affair whatsoever; consequently, I hope, this Motion will appear to be quite free from that Objection which seemed to be urged with so much Weight against my former; and as so much has in this Session been said, upon former Occasions, about the Necessity of an immedi-

ate Inquiry, I shall add no more, but move to resolve, as I have before mentioned, *That a Committee be appointed, &c.*

This Motion being seconded by the same Gentleman that seconded the former, it was first opposed by C. Salustius Crispus, in a Speech to this Effect:

*Mr. President,
S I R,*

WHATEVER were the prevailing Objections, or may be thought to have been the prevailing Objections against the former Motion, by some Gentlemen, that of its being too extensive, either as to Time or Matter, was far from being the most prevailing with me. The Objection which prevailed most with me against the last, and will equally prevail against this, was, that, I think, we have no Cause for an Inquiry, and if we had, this is not a proper Time for it. The Suspicions that are entertained, and the Clamours that are made without Doors, are neither the Suspicions nor the Clamours of sensible and discerning Men, nor of Men of Fortune and Circumstances in our Country, unless it be such as cover their Disaffection to the Royal Family under the Cloak of being discontented with the Measures pursued by the Administration. They are the Suspicions and Clamours either of *Jacobites* and *Republicans*, or of the mere Mob; and, I hope, I shall never see the Measures or Proceedings of this House directed by either of these Sorts of Men. If you were to be directed by *Jacobites* and *Republicans*, you would not only inquire, but hang up every Man that dared serve the Royal Family now upon our Throne, that you might thereby, at last, get the Royal Family itself banished out of the Kingdom; and, if you were to be directed by the Mob, you

you would, for their Diversion, and for no other Cause, send some Minister or other every Year to *Tyburn* or *Tower-Hill*. Such an Execution would be a Holy-day to all the Children, Prentices, and Journeymen, about *London*; and if they are diverted, they trouble their Heads very little at whose Expence, or about the Justice of the Sentence.

The Suspicions or the Murmurs without Doors are never to be a Rule for our Proceedings, unless we are fully convinced, that there is some very good Ground for those Suspicions and Murmurs; and this, I think, cannot with Reason be said by any Gentleman at present. The only Ground of Complaint which the noble Lord was pleased to hint at, was that of applying the publick Money, and all the Favours of the Crown, towards gaining a corrupt Influence at Elections and in Parliament. Sir, with regard to the Favours of the Crown, I do not see how any Minister can be made to answer for their Disposal, because they are directly disposed of by the King himself, who very often disposes of them without so much as asking the Advice of the Minister, whose proper Department they belong to; and therefore, if any Fault could be supposed to have been committed in this Respect, it would be a Charge against the King himself, which, I hope, will be allowed to be a Sort of Charge that cannot be brought by this House, or by either House of Parliament. Perhaps, those Favours have been lately granted generally to those, or the Friends of those, that approved his Majesty's Measures in Parliament. Sir, it is very natural they should be so disposed of: They have always been so disposed of. His Majesty, I am very sure, never proposes, much less pursues any Measure but what he thinks right; therefore he must suppose those Gentlemen to be the best

Friends to their Country, who approve of and support his Measures in Parliament; and, I hope, it will not be imputed to him, or to any of his Ministers as a Crime, to bestow the Favours of the Crown upon those they think the best Friends to their Country. This, I hope, will answer for those Favours that are bestowed by the Crown upon Members of Parliament; and, if they have any Favours in their Gift, or can obtain any Favours from the Crown for other Persons, they are in Gratitude obliged to dispose of those Favours among those who supported their Interest at their Election. This has always been the Practice, it always will, it always ought to be the Practice; because, as I have said, it is what Gentlemen are in Gratitude bound to do; and to be grateful will never, I hope, be deemed criminal.

If this, Sir, is to be called a corrupt Influence, it is impossible for us to be without it, as long as the Crown has any Favours to bestow. It is what every Gentleman practises, and ought to practise in his private Capacity as well as his publick. If he has any Favours to bestow, if he can procure any Favours, as a good Citizen, he ought to bestow them upon, or procure them for those that, in his Opinion, deserve best of their Country; and if he pursues what he thinks the Interest of his Country, he must think, those Men deserve best of their Country, who approve of the Measures he approves of, and support him in the Pursuit of them. This may, indeed, be a corrupt Influence, with regard to some of those upon whom the Favours are bestowed: They may, perhaps, pretend to approve of, and may support their Patron in the Pursuit of Measures which they do not in their Hearts approve of; but with regard to him, it is no corrupt Influence,

as long as he pursues those Measures which, he thinks, will contribute most to the Security and Happiness of his Country. In the Person who bestows, the Disposal of Favours can never be supposed to be with a Design to procure a corrupt Influence; nor can it be imputed to him as a Crime, unless he pursues such Measures as he knows to be destructive to his Country; and as this is a Crime in the Mind only, we can never discover it by an Inquiry, nor can it be justly punished by any sublunary Power: It can be neither detected nor punished by any Thing but the Hand of God.

With regard to the Disposal of publick Money, it is easier, indeed, to discover a criminal Practice. If that has been disposed of towards bribing Votes either in Parliament, or at Elections, and without a Pretence of any real and honest Service performed to the Publick, it may be detected, and ought to be punished. But there are two very strong Reasons for making us believe, that no such Practice has been lately made use of. Such Practices, as all criminal Practices are, are generally carried on in a hidden Manner; but to issue Money from the Treasury for this Purpose, I think impossible to be done in a hidden Manner. There are so many Commissioners, and so many Clerks attending that Board, that such a Practice could not long escape a Discovery; and besides, there must be so many Agents employed to carry this Money to the Country, and to distribute it in a proper Manner, that no Man of common Sense would trust to the Secret's being kept. Some one of those to whom it must be communicated, would certainly, either out of Regard to his Country, or in Expectation of a Reward, or from some Disappointment, become an Informer, and a direct Evidence against

the high Criminal. As no such Thing has happened: As the noble Lord does not so much as pretend, that he has any such Information or Evidence, I must suppose, that no such Crime has been lately committed. Even if there were a general Rumour among Men of Sense and Discretion without Doors, that such a Crime had been frequently committed, I should look upon it as a mere groundless Rumour, unless some Gentleman of Character could say, he had direct Evidence to produce.

Another Argument, Sir, for my thinking the committing of this Crime impossible, is the Method introduced by the Revolution, of appropriating all Parliamentary Grants, and the regular Accounts of the Disposal of all publick Monies that have been of late Years laid annually before Parliament. These Grants are generally so far from having any Excess or Surplus, that they are often insufficient for answering the Services to which they are appropriated by Parliament; and if ever any Surplus has arisen, it has always been accounted for, and has been applied by the next succeeding Session to the Service of the ensuing Year. From hence, I think it impossible to suppose, that any one of the Commissioners of the Treasury, or all of them together, if they were Confederates in the Crime, could have the Command of any publick Money, which they might apply towards carrying on the Practice complained of. I say, Sir, they could have the Command of no publick Money, which they could apply to this Purpose, unless they took it from the Civil List Revenue; and if we consider the many Checks the Disposal of that Revenue is liable to, and the great Care his Majesty takes of that Part of it which is drawn out by special Warrant, we cannot suppose, that

that they could apply any Part of that Revenue to the carrying on of such a Practice, especially such large Sums as would be necessary for carrying it on with Effect, without supposing, which God forbid! any one should suppose, that his Majesty himself was a *Socius Criminis*.

For these Reasons, Sir, I cannot suppose we have the least Cause or Reason for setting up such an Inquiry as is proposed by this Motion; and with all due Regard to this House, I must say, that if an Inquiry were set up, as, I hope, there never will, without any apparent Cause whatever, I should very much suspect, that it proceeded from Malice and Resentment, in which Case I should very little expect, that the Person whose Conduct was by such Means to be inquired into, should meet with any Candour or fair Treatment. If I judge more favourably of the Cause and Character of the noble Lord whose Conduct is now so particularly proposed to be inquired into, than other Gentlemen do, I hope, the Connexion I have with him, the natural Duty I owe him, will plead my Excuse. If I thought his Character suffered among the valuable and discerning Part of Mankind, and such as are true Friends to our happy Constitution, and the Royal Family now upon our Throne, as I am fully convin-

ced of his Innocence, the same Duty that now prompts me to be the first to oppose an Inquiry into his Conduct, would in that Case prompt me to be the first to propose it, as soon as a proper Time presented for that Purpose, which I cannot think the present is.

When the Nation, Sir, is in so much Danger, when our best and most natural Ally upon the Continent is in the most imminent Danger of being destroyed, or so much reduced as never for the future to be able to do us any Service; when we ought to employ all our Time in consulting and taking proper Measures for extricating ourselves and our Allies from the Danger that now threatens all of us, would it be proper, would it be prudent for us to take up our Time with inquiring into the little Frauds that may have been committed in the Management of our publick Revenue, supposing we were certain that some such had been committed? It would give the Courts abroad such a mean Opinion of our Prudence, or such a Suspicion of our Zeal for the present Relief of Europe, that none of them would treat with us, or enter into any Concert or Negotiation with our Sovereign.

[This SPEECH to be concluded, and this DEBATE and JOURNAL to be continued in our MAGAZINE for January.]

In our last Magazine, p. 577, l. 17 and 18, for C. Marcius Coriolanus, read, Cn. Manlius Vulso.

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